

THE Melting of Molly

By
MARIA THOMPSON
DAVIES

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"Now, Mrs. Molly, truly, did you ever see such a peach as she is?" he demanded after I had expressed more than a dozen delighted opinions of Miss Chester. His use of the word "peach" riled me and before I stopped to think I said, "She reminds me more of a string bean."

"Now, Molly, don't be mean just because old Wade has got her out driving behind the grays after kissing your hand under the lilacs yesterday, which, praise be, nobody saw but little me! I'm not sore; why should you be? Aren't you happy with me?"

I withered him with a look, or, rather, tried to wither him, for Tom is no minnow bud.

"The way that girl has started in to wake up this little old town reminds me of the feeling you get under your belt seven minutes after you've sipped an absinth frappe for the first time—you are liable for a good jax and don't know it," he continued enthusiastically. "Let's don't let the folks know that they are off until I get everybody in a full swing of buzz over my queen." I had never seen Tom so enthusiastic over a girl before, and I didn't like it. But I decided not to let him know that, but to get to work putting out the Chester blaze in him and starting one on my own account.

"That's just what I'm thinking about, Tom," I said with a smile that was as



"You are tempting Providence, Molly Carter."

sweet as I could make it, "and as she came with messages to me from one of my best old friends I think I ought to do something to make her have a good time. I was just planning a gorgeous dinner party I want to have for her when you came so suddenly. Do you think we could arrange it for Tuesday evening?"

"Lord love us, Molly! Don't knock the town down like that. Let 'em have more than a week to get used to this white rag of a dress you've been waving in their faces for the last few days. Go slow!"

"I've been going so slow for so many years that I've turned around and I'm going fast backward," I said with a blush that I couldn't help.

"Help! Let my kinship protect me!" exclaimed Tom in alarm, and he pretended to move an inch away from me.

"Yes," I said slowly, and as I looked out of the corner of my eyes from under the lashes that Tom himself had once told me were "too long and black to be tidy" I saw that he was in a condition to get the full shock. "If anybody wakes up this town it will be I," I said as I flung down the gauntlet with a high head.

"Here, Molly, here are the keys of my office and the spark plug to the auto. You can cut off a lock of my hair, and if Judy has got a cake I'll eat it out of your hands. Shall it be California or Nova Scotia? And I prefer my bride served in light gray tweed." Tom really is adorable, and I let him smuggle up just one cousinly second. Then we both laughed and began to plan what Tom was horrible enough to call the resurrection razzoo. But I kept that delicious rose embroidered treasure all to myself. I wanted him to meet it entirely unprepared.

I was glad we had both got over our excitement and were sitting decorously at several inches' distance apart when the judge drew the grays up to the gate, and we both went down to the sidewalk to ask him and the lovely long lady to come in. They couldn't, but we stood and talked to them long enough for Mrs. Johnson to get a good look at us from across the street, and I was afraid I would find Aunt Adeline in a faint when I went into the

house.

Miss Chester was delightfully gracious about the dinner—I almost called it the debut dinner—and the expression on the judge's face when he accepted! I was glad she was sitting beside him and couldn't see. Some women like to make other women unhappy, but I think it is best for you to keep them blissfully unconscious until you get what you want. Anyway, I like that girl all over, and I can't see that her neck is so absolutely impossibly dowdy. However, I think she might have been a little more considerate about discussing Alfred's London triumph over the Italian mission. As a punishment I let Tom put his arm around my waist as we stood watching them drive off and then was sorry for the left gray horse that shied and came in for a crack of the judge's irritated whip.

Then I refused to let Tom come inside the gate and he went down the street whistling, only when he got to the purple lilac he turned and kissed his hand to me. That Mrs. Johnson just couldn't stand, and she came across the street immediately and called me back to the gate.

"You are tempting Providence, Molly Carter," she exclaimed decidedly. "Don't you know Tom Pollard is nothing but a fly up the creek? As a husband he'd chew the rope and run away like a puppy the first time your back was turned. Besides being your cousin, he's younger than you. What do you mean?"

"He's just a week younger, Mrs. Johnson, and I wouldn't tie him for worlds, even if I married him," I said meekly. Somehow I like Mrs. Johnson enough to be meek with her and it always brings her to a higher point of excitement.

"Tie, nonsense; marrying is roping in with ball and chain, to my mind. And a week between a man and a woman in their cradles gets to be fifteen years between them and their graves. I'm going to make you the subject of a silent prayer at the next missionary meeting, and I must go home now to see that Sally cooks up a few of Mr. Johnson's crochets for supper." And she began to hurry away.

"I don't believe you'll be able to make it a silent session about me, Mrs. Johnson," I called after her, and she laughed back from her own front gate. Marriage is the only worm in the bud of Mrs. Johnson's life, and her laugh has a snap to it even if it is not very sugary sweet.

When I told Judy about the dinner party and asked her to get the yellow barber to come help her and her nephew wait on the table she grinned such a wide grin that I was afraid of being swallowed. She understood that Aunt Adeline wouldn't be interested in it until I had time to tell her all about it. Anyway, she will be going over to Springfield on a pilgrimage to see Mr. Henderson's sister next week. She doesn't know it yet, but I do.

After that I spent all the rest of the evening in planning my dinner party, and I had a most royal good time. I always have had lots of company, but mostly the spend the day kind with relatives or more relatives to supper. That's what most entertaining in Hillsboro is like; but, as I say, once in awhile the old slow pacer wakes up.

I'll never forget my first real dinner party, as the flower girl for Caroline Evans' wedding, when she married the Chicago millionaire, from which Hillsboro has never yet recovered. I was sixteen, felt dreadfully naked without a tucker in my dress and saw Alfred for the first time in evening clothes—his first. I can hardly stand thinking about how he looked even now. I haven't been to very many dinner parties in my life, but from this time on I mean to indulge in them often. Candle light, pretty women's shoulders, black coat sleeves, cut glass and flowers are good ingredients for a joy drink, and why not?

But when I got to planning about the gorgeous food I wanted to give them all I got into what I feel came near being a serious trouble. It was writing down the recipe for the nesselrode pudding they make in my family that undid me. Suddenly hunger rose up from nowhere and gripped me by the throat, gnawed me all over like a bone, then shook me until I was limp and unresisting. I must have astralized myself down to the pantry, for when I became conscious I found myself in company with a loaf of bread, a plate of butter and a huge jar of jam.

I sat down by the long table by the window and slowly prepared to enjoy myself. I cut off four slices and buttered them to an equal thickness and then more slowly put a thick silver spoon into the jam. I even paused to admire in Judy's mirror over the table the effect of the cascade of lace that fell across my arm and lost itself in the blue shimmer of old Rene's masterpiece of a negligee, then deep down I buried the spoon in the purple sweetness. I had just lifted it high in the air when out of the lilac scented dark of the garden came a laugh.

"Why, Molly, Molly, Molly!" drawled that miserable man doctor as he came and leaned on the sill right close to my elbow. The spoon crashed on the table, and I turned and crashed into words.

"You are cruel, cruel, John Moore, and I hate you worse than I ever did before, if that is possible. I'm hungry, hungry to death, and now you've spoiled it all! Go away before I wet this nice crisp bread and jam with tears into a mush I'll have to eat with a spoon. You don't know what it is to want something sweet so bad you are willing to steal it—from yourself!" I fairly blazed my eyes down into his and moved as far away from him as the table would let me.

"Don't I, Molly?" he asked softly

after looking straight in my eyes for a long minute that made me drop my head until the blue bow I had tied on the end of my long plait almost got into the sattered jam. Even at such a moment as that I felt how glad old Rene would have been to have given such a nice man as the doctor a treat like that blue silk chef d'oeuvre of hers. I was glad myself.

"Don't I, Peaches?" he asked again in a still softer voice. Again I had that sensation of being against something warm and great and good like your own mother's breast, and I don't know how I controlled it enough not to—to—

"Well, have some jam then," I managed to say with a little laugh as I turned away and picked up the silver spoon.

"Thank you, I will, all of it and the bread and butter too," he answered. In that detestable friendly tone of voice as he drew himself up and sat in the window. "Hustle, Peaches, if you are going to feed me, for I'm ravenous. I haven't had any supper. You have, so I don't mind taking it all away from you—every bit of it."

"Supper," I sniffed as I spread the jam on those lovely, lovely slices of bread and thick butter that I had fixed for my own self. "That apple toast combination tires me so now that I forget it if I can." As I handed him the first slice of drippy lusciousness I turned my head away. He thought it was from the expression of that jam, but it was from his eyes.

"Slice up the whole loaf, Peaches, and let's get on a jam jag! Come with me just this once and forget—forget"—He didn't finish his sentence and I'm glad. We neither of us said anything more as I fed him that whole loaf. I found that the bite I took off of each piece I had ready for him when he finished with the one he had in hand satisfied me as nothing I had ever eaten in all my life before had done, while at the same time my nibbles soothed his conscience about robbing me.

His teeth are big and strong and white and his jaws work like machinery. He is the strongest man I ever saw, and his gauntness is all muscle. What is that glow a woman gets from feeding a hungry man whom she likes with her own hands, and why should I want to be certain that he kissed the lace on my sleeve as he brushed his face when I reached across him to catch an inquisitive rose that I saw peeping in the window right at us?

LEAF SEVENTH.

Which?

"THE juice of a lemon in two glasses of cold water to be drunk immediately on waking!" Page eleven! I've handed myself that lemon every morning now until I am sensitive with myself about it. If there was ever anybody "on the water wagon" it's I, and I have to sit on the front seat from dawn to dusk to get in the gallon of water I'm supposed to consume in that time. Sometime I'm going to get mixed up and try to drink my bath if I don't look out. I dreamed night before last that I was taking a bath in a glass of ice cream soda water and trying to hide from Dr. John behind the dab of ice cream that seemed inadequate for food or protection. I haven't had even one glass for two months, and I woke up in a cold perspiration of embarrassment and raging hunger.

I don't know what I'm going to do about this book and I've got myself into trouble about writing things beside records in it. He looked at me this morning as coolly as if I was just anybody and said:

"I would like to see that record now, Mrs. Molly. It seems to me you are about as slim as you want to be. How did you tip the scales last time you weighed, and have you noticed any trouble at all with your heart?"

"I weigh 134 pounds and I've got to melt and freeze and starve off that four," I answered, ignoring the heart question and also the question of pro-



"Expand your chest."

ducing this book. Wonder what he would do if I gave it to him to read just as it is?

"How about the heart?" he persisted, and I may have imagined the smile in his eyes, for his mouth was purely professional. Anyway, I lowered my lashes down on to my cheeks and answered experimentally:

"Sometimes it hurts." Then a cyclone happened to me.

"Come here to me a minute!" he said quickly, and he turned me around and put his head down between my shoulders and held me so tight against his ear that I could hardly breathe.

"Expand your chest three times and breathe as deep as you can," he ordered me against my back buttons. I expanded and breathed—pretty quickly at that.

"Now hold your breath as long as you can," he commanded, and it fitted my mood exactly to do so.

"Can't find anything," he said at last, letting me go and looking carefully at my face. His eyes were all anxiety, and I liked it. "When does it hurt you and how?" he asked anxiously.

"Moonlight nights and lonesomeness," I answered before I could stop myself, and what happened then was worse than any cyclone. He got white for a minute and just looked at me as if I was a bug stuck on a pin, then gave a short little laugh and turned to the table.

"I didn't understand you were joking," he said quietly.

That maddened me, and I would have done anything to make him think I was not the foolish thing he evidently had classified me as being. I snatched at my mind and shook out a mixture of truth and lies that fooled even myself and gave them to him, looking straight in his face. I would have cracked all the ten commandments to save myself from his contempt.

"I'm not joking," I said jerkily. "I am lonesome. And worse than being lonesome, I'm scared. I ought to have stayed just the quiet relict of Mr. Carter and gone on to church meetings with Aunt Adeline and let myself be fat and respectable, but I haven't got the character. You thought I went to town to buy a monument, and I didn't. I bought enough clothes for two brides, and now I'm scared to wear 'em, and I don't know what you'll think when you see my bankbook. Everybody is talking about me and that dinner party Tuesday night, and Aunt Adeline says she can't live in a house of mourning so desecrated any longer. She's going back to the cottage. Aunt Betty Pollard says that if I want to get married I ought to do it to Wilson Graves because of the seven children, and then everybody would be so relieved that they are taken care of that they would forget that Mr. Carter hasn't been dead quite one year yet. Mrs. Johnson says I ought to be declared a minor and put as a ward to you. I can't help Judge Wade's sending me flowers and Tom's sitting on my front step night and day. I'm not strong enough to carry him away and murder him. I am perfectly miserable, and I'm—"

"Now, that'll do, Molly; just hush for a half minute and let me talk to you," said Dr. John as he took my hand in his and drew me near him. "No wonder your heart hurts if it has got all that load of trouble on it, and we'll just get a little of that 'scare' off. You put yourself in my hands, and you are to do just as I tell you, and I say—forget it! Come with me while I make a call. It is a long drive, and I'm—I'm lonesome sometimes myself."

I saw the worst was over, and I breathed freely again, but I had talked so much truth in that fiction that I felt just as I said I did, which is a slightly unnatural feeling for a woman. There was nothing for it but to go with him, and I wanted to most awfully.

To my dying day I'll never forget that little house, way out on the Cane Run pike, he took me to in his shabby little car. Just two tiny rooms, but they were clean and quiet, and a girl with the sweetest face I ever saw lay in the bed with her eyes bright with pride and a tiny, tiny little bundle close beside her. The young farmer was red with embarrassment and anxiety.

"She's all right today, but she worries because she don't think I can tend to the baby right," he said, and he did look helpless. "Her mother had to go home for two days, but is coming tomorrow. I don't undress and wash the youngster myself. It won't hurt him to stay bundled up until granny comes, will it, Doc?"

"Not a bit," answered Dr. John in his big comforting voice. But I looked at the girl, and I understood her. She wanted that baby clean and fresh even if it was just five days old, and I felt all of a sudden terribly capable. I picked up the bundle and went into the other room with it, where a kettle was boiling on the stove and a large bucket by the door. I found things by just a glance from it, and the hour I spent with that small baby was one of the most delicious of all my life. I never was left entirely to myself with one before, and I did all I wanted to this one, guided by instinct and desire. He slept right through and was the darlingest thing I ever saw when I laid him back on the bed by her. I never looked in Dr. John's direction once, though I felt him all the time.

But on the way home I gave myself the surprise of my life! Suddenly I turned my face against his sleeve and cried as I never had before. I felt safe, for it is a cliff road and he had to drive carefully. However, he managed to press that one arm against my cheek in a way that comforted me into stopping when I saw we were near town. I got out of the car at the garage and walked away through the garden home without looking in his direction at all. I never seem to be able to look at him as I do at other people. We hadn't spoken two words since we had left the little house in the woods with that happy-faced girl in it. He has more sense than just a man.

(To be continued)

"Do you believe in a minimum wage for girls?"

"Sure. I pay it."—Detroit Free Press.

"But I don't exactly see the point."

"Plain as mud, sah. I'd go that far to fight Satan, wouldn't I?"

In a way, yes.

"And 'spose the Lawd would slip him out on me and slip a half dozen wildcats in on me to take his place?"

THE MAN IN DOUBT

By M. QUAD

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As I traveled a mountain road of West Virginia I came upon a squatter seated on a log in front of his pole cabin, and after we had given each other good day he asked:

"Bound for the camp meetin' at Cedar Grove, stranger?"

"I hadn't heard there was one there," I replied.

"Yes, and it's a whopper. Powerful lot of prayin' and singin' over thar."

"Aren't you interested in it?"

"I ar' and I ain't. I sorter want to go, and then I sorter think I hadn't better. That's the way with the old woman too."

"You think there may be trouble there?"

"Oh, no."

"Too busy with your wor'?"

"No, stranger. The Lawd order be at that camp meetin', hadn't he?"

"I should say so."

"And he order gin us a fair deal if the old woman and me went over?"

"Yes."

"But what I'm afraid of is that he won't."

I looked at him and wondered what he meant, and after a minute he went on:

"Sit down and be to home, and I'll tell you a bit of a story. It happened y'ars ago. You see, me and the old woman had both bin havin' chills and faver, shakin' like scared rabbits one day and a burnin' up the next, and I was almost too weak to lift an ax when a feller named Abe Brockford sot out to humiliate me. He wasn't doin' any braggin' as long as I was able to be about, but when he heard how poorly I was he squared off in front of the cabin one night and shouted:

"Hello thar, inside! Am I makin' a mistake in supposin' this to be the residence of Bill Hope?"

"Yo' ain't," says I as I crawls to the door in my weakness.

"Come out like a man and squar' off at me!" says he.

"I told him I'd been freezin' and burnin' and couldn't fight a rabbit, but that only made him wuss."

"Bill Hope, if yo've got any mercy in yo'r heart come out yere and dance around while I pulverize yo'r bones!"

"It hurt me mighty bad to be talked to that way," said the old man, "but I was helpless about it. 'All I could do was to shet the doah and fling myself on the bed and cuss and weep. The old woman tried to console me, but the feller kept his mouth goin' 'till I was pretty nigh crazy. By and by I says to her:

"Do yo' reckon that if I prayed to the Lawd for strength my prayer would be answered?"

"That's accordin'," she answers.

"What do yo' want the strength fur?"

"To go out and smash Abe Brockford."

"Then yo' won't git it. The Lawd ain't mixin' up in sich rows."

"But he might if yo' prayed too."

"But I shan't do it. When the critter out thar gets tired of talkin' he'll go home."

"I lay quiet for half an hour, but Abe didn't go, and when the old woman sees how bad I was feelin' she says:

"Bill, I'm willin' to try a sort of experiment. It ain't right to bother the Lawd with our troubles, and prayers and fightin' don't go together, but under the circumstances I'll do what I kin."

"All of a sudden I begun to feel stronger, and by the time the old woman had finished I told her that I was all right to go out an' drive Abe into the air."

"Better not go," she says as she looks troubled.

"Why not?"

"Bekase I'm not snub about it. I prayed hard 'nuff, but I haven't got the feelin' thar yo' are gwine out to whop anybody. Sorter feels to me that yo'll git the worst of it."

"It was mighty curious about my gittin' strong," mused Bill, "and to this day I can't make it out. Perhaps it was all owing to my madness. The old woman hung on fur me not to go, but I put her aside and rushed out. It was a darish night, but I saw Abe standin' a few feet away and called fur him. I was gwine to whop him blind in two minits, but I hadn't counted on startin' things. Fustly, the critter had got tired and gone home, and, secondly, a powerful big b'ar had taken his place. I knowed it as I grabbed his fur, but it was then too late. He jest hauled off with his right paw and fetched me a swat on the side of the head that put me out of it, and it was daylight befo' I come to and found myself on the bed."

"What's happened?" I asked of the old woman.

"Experimentin'," she answers.

"As how?"

"Prayin' to the Lawd to back yo' to wallop Abe Brockford. Abe slipped out and a b'ar slipped in, and as nigh as I kin make out Providence didn't stand by yo' fur shucks."

"And that's the reason you are in doubt about going to the camp meetin', is it?" I asked as he finished his story.

"It ar', stranger."

"But I don't exactly see the point."

"Plain as mud, sah. I'd go thar to fight Satan, wouldn't I?"

In a way, yes.

"And 'spose the Lawd would slip him out on me and slip a half dozen wildcats in on me to take his place?"

Peoples' Column

FOR SALE.

Farm and Town property always for sale. Money loaned on Real Estate. WADE TURNER, Merchants Bank Bldg.

FARMS

If you want to sell or buy a farm, correspond with Chas. McKay, Land Agent, Sabina, O. (10-30)

Lost—Morning of July 2 in or near B. & O. Station, brooch, wreath of black onyx and pearls. Reward given if returned to 326 W. Main street.

FOR SALE—A few second hand and slightly used automobiles. No reasonable offer refused. adv. SCOTT SKEEN.

FOR SALE—Two good driving horses one bay mare ten years old and one bay gelding three years old, both well broken. F. R. Terrell, Lynchburg, Ohio. adv.

FOR SALE—Two high grade polled Jersey bull calves from one to two months of age. Sired by the double standard polled grand champion Jersey bull of the last three local fairs. Grandson of Imported Mon-Plaisir's Duke, choice \$20. F. H. G. BELL, Marshall, O.

FOR SALE—Buy a "Hoosier" Kitchen cabinet now. It saves time, labor and steps. One dollar delivers it. adv. KINCAID & SON.

Legal Notice.

Notice is hereby given that until the 30th day of July 1913, at 12 o'clock, noon, sealed proposals will be received at the office of the Clerk of the Board of Education of Carmel Special School District of Highland County, Ohio, for the material and for the building a frame school house on the lot situated in Carmel, Highland County, Ohio, according to the plans and specifications on file in the Clerk's Office.

Each bid shall contain the name of every person interested in the same, and shall be accompanied by a sufficient guarantee of some disinterested person that if the bid is accepted a contract will be entered into, and the performance of it properly secured. Labor and material being embraced in the work, bids for each item shall be separately stated, with the price therefor.

None but the lowest responsible bid will be accepted, and the Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids, or to accept any bid for both labor and material which is the lowest in the aggregate.

By order of the Board of Education of Carmel Special School District of Highland County, Ohio.

O. L. HIATT, Carmel, Ohio.

Clerk of said Board of Education.

(6-26)

Legal Notice.

Elizabeth Eubanks Hughes, if living, whose place of residence is unknown, and if deceased her heirs at law, whose names and places of residence are unknown, will take notice that on the 25th day of June A. D. 1913 Austin Eubanks, et al., as Plaintiffs, filed their action in the Common Pleas Court of Highland County, Ohio, asking for a partition of the following described real estate, situate in the County of Highland State of Ohio, and in the township of Brush-creek to-wit:

Beginning at the center of the Sinking Spring and Cynthiana turnpike, 4 poles S. 60 deg. E. from a large elm South-westerly corner to a fifty-one acre tract conveyed by Samuel Amen to said Austin Eubanks, M. Eubanks with said turnpike N. 28 1/2 deg. E. 42 poles, N. 46 deg. E. 53 poles to a culvert thence leaving the said turnpike at 4 deg. W. 30 1/2-100 poles to a stake; thence S. 46 deg. W. 84 poles to a stake in the line of said fifty-one acre tract; thence with said line S. 41 deg. E. 30 poles; thence N. 60 deg. E. 40 poles; thence N. 60 deg. E. 4 poles to the beginning, containing twelve and one-fourth (12 1/4) more or less.

Said petition further states that Geo. L. Garrett as trustee of Anthony Eubanks, claims some interest in said real estate; and that Austin Eubanks holds a tax claim against the same; and that said petition asks that the title to said real estate be quieted in said Austin Eubanks and other Plaintiffs herein and in said Henry M. Eubanks, as against said Elizabeth Eubanks Hughes, if living, and if dead against her unknown heirs, and that unless they answer said petition on or before the 23rd day of August, 1913, judgment will be taken according to the petition.

WILSON & McBRIDE, Attorneys for Plaintiffs.

Notice of Public Sale.

In the Common Pleas Court of Highland County, Ohio.

B. W. Muntz, Trustee, et al., Plaintiffs,

vs.

Robt. E. Fulton, et al., Defendants.

In pursuance of an order of the Common Pleas Court of Highland County, Ohio, I will offer for sale at public auction on the 2nd day of August at 9 o'clock a. m. on the premises in the village of Lynchburg, Highland County, Ohio, the following real estate situate in the County of Highland State of Ohio, on Pearl street, W. of Main St. in the said village, described as follows:

Beginning in the center of B. & O. S. W. R. R. at the intersection of the west line of alley No. 1 of said town of Lynchburg; thence N. 1 1/2 deg. W. 22 rods to the S. line of Pearl street; thence with said line of Pearl street S. 89 1/2 deg. W. 6 1/2-100 rods; thence S. 12 deg. E. 9 1/2 rods to the S. E. corner of the lot of Anna Holland thence with the S. line of the lot of Anna Holland S. 84 deg. W. 4 rods; thence S. 12 deg. E. 1 rod; thence S. 20 1/2 deg. W. 4 1/2-100 rods to the E.